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Monday, March 13, 1995

Duxbury voters OK new library

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

DUXBURY — There may be a new public library in Duxbury before the turn of the century, but not an 18-hole public golf course.

At a standing-room-only town meeting Saturday, voters agreed to convert an empty school into a new library — if the state provides \$2.1 million of the estimated \$6.3 million cost — but soundly rejected a proposal to add nine holes to the North Hill golf course.

After an hour and 45 minutes of mid-afternoon discussion and debate, the library plan was adopted by a lopsided vote of 746-103. Under the proposal, the town will borrow \$3 million to convert the empty upper Alden school into a library three times larger than the present facility.

Town meeting rejects golf course expansion

Nearly two hours later, the next article on the warrant, golf course expansion, failed by a vote of 255-209.

Both measures required a two-thirds majority.

Calling the library "a \$6 million jewel on a hill for \$3 million," finance committee Chairman Edward O'Sullivan said the plan won't increase the tax rate because the cost of borrowing will be offset by the retirement of the debt on the Chandler School.

Citing overcrowded conditions at the present building, fiscal advisory committee member Frank Doyle said, "There's an overwhelming need and a sense of urgency.

It's time to move forward."

Deborah Bornheimer, chairwoman of the library building committee, said converting the upper Alden school will be less expensive than other options.

It will cost \$1.8 million to repair the present building and make it accessible to disabled people, she said, and that would result in a 50 percent reduction in shelf space and the loss of 3,000 square feet of floor space.

Resident Joseph Mahoney suggested that building a library in an increasingly computerized age is "like a buggy whip factory deciding to expand production as automobiles begin to roll down Main Street."

But Bornheimer said, "In this town, at least, people are still reading books to their sleeping babies."

Bornheimer's husband, Moderator Allen Bornheimer, yielded the gavel to former Moderator Charles Fargo during the library debate and vote.

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Library director Joanne Lamothe listens as an article to convert an empty school into a new library is discussed at Duxbury town meeting Saturday.

The Patriot Ledger